

The Wisconsin State Journal

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Cutting The Tax Melon

At the present time, the lion's share of the property taxes collected from power and light utilities goes to the communities in which utility plants are located.

A bill in the 1951 legislature would change the tax distribution formula so some of the revenue would go to the hundreds of communities where the utility customers live.

This bill should be passed.

A research committee appointed by the Legislative Council spent a year bringing out facts on this issue. The Legislative Council's committee made two important recommendations after its study:

ONE. It recommended that in the distribution of utility property taxes, equal weight be given to the location of utility property and to utility sales (in other words, where the customers live).

TWO. Under present law, some school districts get a slice of the tax; others don't. The committee recommended that all municipalities be required to distribute a uniform portion of their utility tax "take" to school districts on a school census basis.

Power and light utilities now pay almost \$10,000,000 in property taxes. Of this, about \$1,000,000 goes to school districts.

But the present split-up of this revenue is not based upon the need of the municipality that receives it.

As a matter of fact, the reverse is true. Utility property is taxed at the "average state rate." And as property taxes elsewhere go up, utility taxes increase. This automatically gives more revenue to municipalities in which utility plants are located. This allows those favored communities to reduce their other property taxes at the very time citizens elsewhere are being burdened with heavier property taxes.

Under the present helter-skelter system, 22 communities in Wisconsin receive from utilities the equivalent of 10 mills of their total tax load. In 1947, these 22 communities alone received \$946,000 in utility property tax "kickback," plus \$65,000 as their share of the income taxes paid by those same utilities. The sum of these two sources of revenue from utility taxpayers exceeded the total property taxes these communities levied directly on their own residents that year.

Neither does the present law make sense in its allocation of utility tax revenue to school districts. In certain cases, school districts share in 65 per cent of the utility tax going to a community. In other cases, school districts get no share of the tax.

In 56 of Wisconsin's 71 counties, town and village school districts share in the utility property taxes, but city schools do not. In 14 counties, schools get no share of the tax. In Milwaukee county, town boards MAY give some of the utility tax revenue to school districts. Milwaukee city schools do not get a share.

There is no planning, no reason for this confusion and differentiation. Some communities and school districts get money because the law says they should receive it, whether the need is there or not. Other communities and school districts don't share in the utility tax melon, although their need may be greater and their school population many times that of the more fortunate districts.

Unquestionably, changing the present law will arouse resentment in the 22 localities now receiving the utility tax "windfall" which allows them to keep their general property taxes down. Members of the legislature should resist the inevitable pressure, and put an end to the present unfair system.

Sterling North Reviews the Books

The Fabulous Clan Barrymore

We Barrymores. By Lionel Barrymore as told to Cameron Shipp. (Appleton Century Crofts. 311 pp. \$3.50)

Lionel Barrymore ends his autobiography with these haunting lines from "Macbeth":

"Out, out brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage And then is heard no more."

But there have been few candles brighter, few hours upon this stage more memorable than those here revealed. To his three major acts—painting, musical composition and acting—Lionel Barrymore now adds a fourth. He is a raconteur without peer among living actors. The salty saga of the great Drew-Barrymore clan comes from his memory as fresh as a sea breeze.

It is generally forgotten that neither John or Lionel Barrymore went willingly to the profession of their parents and grandparents.

While Ethel took to the stage like a swan to an enchanted lake, her roistering brothers preferred to cage their drinks and meals and live in garrets rather than accept what from the first was their destiny.

Lionel was 28 before he appeared in a major role on Broadway. He was 30 before he admitted he could not make a living with his painting or his music and began reluctantly to accept the fact that he was, by profession, an actor.

He had played baseball, had been knocked out by John L. Sullivan and Bob Fitzsimmons, had modeled for Frederic Remington, the western painter, in fact had struggled against his fate for three decades before returning from four years of art instruction in Paris to go to work for D. W. Griffith in a borrowed dress suit, making films at the welcome wage of \$10 a day.

All through Barrymore's film and stage career he has continued to paint and to compose music. His orchestrations and



The Three Barrymores — Lionel, Ethel, John—in "Rasputin and the Empress"

original compositions have been presented by several of the finest symphony orchestras in America, and his prints have been included in the 100 best of the year.

Remarkable about this memoir is the unaffected modesty of the author. There is high praise for Ethel and for John. There is a paean of affection and respect for Grandmother Drew. There is understanding for Maurice Barrymore, so much like his son John in his dash and bravado and irresponsibility.

But somehow Lionel himself is unwilling to sing his own praises. This in an actor is virtually unique.

After Mum Mum Drew's death, Ethel took her grandmother's place as the solid member of the family to whom everyone turned for moral support. Ethel was sane and reliable. Unlike John who in 1931 made and spent more than \$400,000 in a single year, or Lionel who for some years was nearly as extravagant, Ethel kept her head and some of her money.

But Lionel's affection for John is perhaps greater than as though that unpredictable brother had been sensible. John's death scene is one of the most moving dramatic episodes on or off the stage. Lionel tells it better than Gene Fowler did, although it was Fowler who shared with John the last pitifully lusty jest.

This is the big-minded, big-hearted life story of a really great man who is part of an even larger tradition of the Royal Family of the American theater.

Don't Let Sanity Spoil Your Fun

A Mouse is Born. By Anita Loos. (Doubleday. 214 pp. \$2.50)

The Man on the Couch. By James D. Proctor. (Dial. 244 pp. \$2.75)

Hopalong-Freud, and Other Modern Literary Characters. By Ira Wallach. (Human. 133 pp. \$2.00)

Rare is the book these days which can read without anger or frustration. Yet, at our grim world needs above everything else is to laugh at itself.

This week, by some miracle known only to the elusive gods of laughter, we have three little books so completely gay that for a few hours everyone in our household forgot the four headlines.

Anita Loos, author of that hardy perennial "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," has dreamed up in her new heroine, Effie Huntriss, (popularly known as "The Bust") a female as dumb and delightful as her fabulous predecessor, Lorelei Lee. Effie is Hollywood's chief exponent of sex. Somehow she managed to get through fifth grade, but her spelling would lead one to believe it must have been a progressive school. Ex-husbands and boy friends litter her primrose path to fame.

But Effie wants her "little mouse" (Effie is expecting) to know the truth about Mommy. So she is writing it all down in a book while she awaits the blessed event.

Cleaned up a bit for the censor, "A Mouse is Born" would make a hilarious movie. Judy Holliday should be able to play Effie to the last gasp.

"The Man on the Couch" by James D. Proctor is a patient's revenge upon the psychoanalysts.

The female playing the role of serpent in this satire is a middle-aged witch named Polly Freeman, who moves into the happy home of George and Lavinia Pringle and proceeds to threaten their marriage with her witch's brew composed of Id, Ego,

Gard Knows Hosses and Men

"Midnight, Roden Champion," by Robert E. Gard. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.50.

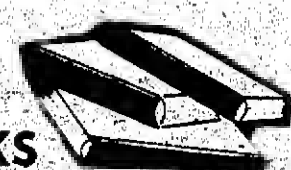
Reviewed by Wallace Wilkoff

Robert Gard, director of the Wisconsin Idea theater, has turned out, in "Midnight, Roden Champion," a simple, heart-warming tale about bronco-busting cowboys and champion "hosses."

Based on the story of the greatest rodeo horse of all time, Midnight, it's a story of Sandy Macpherson, the Canadian lad who raised—Midnight, lost him, and met him again in the championship contest at Madison Square Garden.

It's not just a story of a contest between man and horse; Gard has captured the determination of Sandy to do right by Midnight, the calm, earthy inspiration provided by Belle Monroe, the trick rider, in converting Sandy from a "hoss hum" and the emotional tension of champion rider upon champion horse as no other writer since Will James.

Indeed, the unadorned Western language in the book and careful handling



Our Town

News of Your Neighbors

Edited by Russ Pyre

Compiled by The State Journal Staff

Cooperation

Passersby on the Capitol square one day last week were interested observers of a cooperative window-shopping project undertaken by two grey-haired, handicapped women.

One, as evidenced by a conspicuous hearing aid, was deaf. The other, as evidenced by a white cane she carried, was blind.

And the deaf woman was describing to the blind woman all the details of the dresses on display in the store window.

Coat of Mud

Probably no little boy ever got more thoroughly muddled than did "Rick" Hynum, 8-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarke R. Hynum, 2710 Oakridge ave., at Vilas park last Sunday.

"Rick" was sitting on the wall that encloses the pony yard, watching older children feed and pet the ponies.

It had rained hard Saturday night and the pony yard, several feet lower than the ground outside the wall, was a quagmire.

Suddenly a playful black pony nipped "Rick's" sweater and pulled him off the wall, into the mud.

Frantically, fearing "Rick" might be trampled by the startled Shetlands, his daddy reached down from the wall and rescued the small boy, but not until the child had received a complete coat of mud.

"Dad" Hynum survived the accident with his Sunday suit unsoiled, but "Rick," his mother says, had to be changed "from the skin out."

Two Age Factors

Robert Meyer, 2831 Harvey st., was a near victim of "mistaken identity" recently because of the car he was driving.

Bob, who recently purchased a 1936 sedan at a bargain price just for fishing and other "knock-out" uses, drove past Madison Police Officer John Henry on a corner one day.

Bob waved and tooted his horn. Officer Henry waved back, but didn't know at whom he was waving, until he found out later that it was Meyer, driving the 1936 Graham, a car now out of production.

"I thought it looked like Meyer," Henry reported later, "but I didn't think he was old enough to be driving a car that old."

Another Pun, We Fear

Good advertising always pays off in more business, the advertising people say. If that is true, then a cleaning establishment on the East side should do right well.

Its trucks busily running about town in search of new business, or taking care of all business, carry the following sign on the rear panel:

"We not only live for you—we 'dye' for you!"

All in the Family?

For more than 10 years the Wisconsin Alumni assn. has been giving out cash scholarships to the outstanding junior man and junior woman on the campus.

But this year, for the first time, it has an engaged couple competing for the awards, according to A. John Berge, executive secretary.

The winners are selected from a panel of 6 junior men and 6 junior women compiled by the University of Wisconsin faculty.

"When I got the list," Berge says, "I noticed that one of the candidates was Barbara Barnum, Milwaukee, and it occurred to me that she might be Rillie Barnum's daughter, so I checked up."

"In so doing, I found a newspaper clipping from The Wisconsin State Journal of Jan. 7, 1951, which announced the engagement of Barbara Barnum and Arthur Laun, Jr., of Sheboygan."

"The interesting part of the story is that Arthur Laun is one of the 6 junior men recommended by the faculty for the award."

He's a Big Help

Normally, "Cokie" the coal-black cocker spaniel owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Rodgerston, 3753 Sargent st., is one of the neighborhood's pets.

His bouncing black body wiggles with delighted frenzy when anyone takes special interest in him or his doings.

But George, who is director of the Dane county junior fair, wonders whether Cokie is making friends with his present spring tactics.

The neighbors, busily raking their yards, are inclined to toss sticks into the gutter, to get them temporarily out of the way.

But since Cokie is a "hunting" dog, with strong retriever instincts, he has been "helpfully" carrying back the sticks for the rakers' feet as fast as they are thrown off the lawn.

At this point George usually has to step in and "call off his dog."

Rivals for Susie?

A pair of robins took up housekeeping last week on a second-floor window sill at the newly built home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Van Etten, 206 Judd st.

Displaying complete disinterest in the matter of privacy, the robins selected a sill directly over a doorway as their building site.

The Van Etten's are mystified as to why the birds chose that particular location, because there are plenty of trees nearby.

The nest, however, turned out to be a neat job, evidencing experience and workmanship.

It was empty up to early last week, but Mrs. Van Etten reported Wednesday morning that Mother Robin had started laying her eggs.

Hyde 'Gets Bird'

Each month members of the Madison Lions club who have birthdays during that period are honored briefly at the regular luncheon.

Among those honored in April was Prof. Grant Hyde, University of Wisconsin journalism department.

Hyde won the "consolation" gift at the Apr. 24 luncheon.

His prize? A baby turkey—to provide "the bird" for his next Thanksgiving dinner—donated by Lion Morris Klinka.

Question: Who Pays?

Conflicting versions of a knock-down, drag-out row over Exchange, the Madison Exchange club's rabbit, were published last week by Quade Aqua Splash, the club's "house organ."

Two undisputed facts emerging from the conflict appear to be:

1. That Lawyer Steve Gavin, first temporary custodian of the rabbit, again was "awarded" her custody for a week as a penalty for absenteeism.

2. That Gavin, at last week's club meeting, arose to demand reimbursement of \$7.50, plus an unexplained \$2 "incident" fee, for "boarding out" Exchange.

After that the versions begin to diverge, and they're all mixed up with two trips to Washington—not by the rabbit but by two of the members figuring in the uproarious debate.

The essence of Gavin's version seems to be:

1. That he had a legitimate excuse for his absence, which he reported to Connie Stolen, program chairman and member of the rabbit committee, and shouldn't have been "awarded" Exchange in the first place.

2. That he was leaving for Washington on business and had to "board out" Exchange because he couldn't find Don Sinaiko after he was informed that Don was to be the rabbit's substitute recipient.

The other version, that of Editor Felix Kremer, a member of the rabbit committee, was:

1. That Steve gave his excuse to Connie just as Stolen was about to hand a plane for Washington and thus was unable to inform other members of the rabbit committee.

2. That Editor Kremer, after checking on the excuse with Connie, phoned Steve's house at 6 p. m. that Exchange should be delivered to Don Sinaiko.

3. That Steve had plenty of time to deliver the rabbit, because Don's business place doesn't close until 9 p. m., but Steve "evidently did not burden himself."

All of which was confusing enough, but still more confusing was the outcome of Gavin's demand for reimbursement, as reported by Editor Kremer through Exchange as his mouthpiece.

John Cullinan withdrew a motion that the rabbit committee stand the expense after Editor Kremer, according to Exchange, threatened that the committee would resign and appoint John as sole member, with sole responsibility of paying the bill.

Then she says: "A motion was made by Connie Stolen that the request for reimbursement be denied and it carried (?) by a tremendous vote—almost as great as the vote FOR reimbursement."

Yeh! Kind of Busy!

R. A. "Rube" Faust, 4304 S. Owen dr., produce specialist for the Madison area A and P stores, is about ready to admit that the life of a mother of two small sons is not all "peaches and cream and listening to radio serials."

Faust is busy enough at his own job, but for a few days last week, his wife, Virginia, was ill and Rube was forced to pinch hit as baby sitter for his two boys, 3-year-old Danny and young Donny, going on 2.

The weather was wonderful for boys to play outside in the sunshine, but they had to be fed, too.

The youngsters could romp in the adequate Faust back yard, but there was the traffic on the wide road out front for which to be on the lookout.

Children, of course, have a habit of getting into mud and water (and it rained often last week), so that means clothes to change.

Young men (especially young fellows like Danny and Donny Faust) often hurt themselves, and make necessary the "evils" of iodine and bandages.

And questions. There are hundreds of them from a 3-year-old boy. (Ask any father.)

"Why is the sky, Daddy?" "Where does the wind come from?" "Who mows the other side of the grass?"

Rube Faust had a few days of that last week—in addition to his job—and although he doesn't recommend it for all fathers, he admits the experience was enlightening.

"They can keep a fellow kind of busy at that," was Faust's modest comment.

Our Debt to Izvestia

Izvestia recently published a story that 10 million Americans carry rabbit feet because their capitalist masters deliberately encourage superstition in order to enslave the masses.

We don't quite see the connection between the rabbit foot and slavery. But we can only admire the perseverance of Izvestia in taking a census of rabbit feet. Now we shall expect the enterprising Russian newspaper to count the black cats crossing the road, the number of leaders that are set out daily by the monopoly capitalists and the Anglo-American imperialists for people to walk under, and the buckeyes thrust into pockets in order to keep the American people properly subdued.

What would the world do without Izvestia?—Kansas City Times

Notes on Spring Romance

Spring's gentle breezes inspire the recording of these two notes on romance:

CASE ONE: In Milwaukee, Homer D. Dougan, age 26, and his 21-year-old girl friend are going to put up a fight for their "constitutional rights."

Dougan and the light of his life were parked along a Milwaukee parkway in the hours after midnight. Three times policemen warned them to "move on," because of a 1938 ordinance prohibiting such "loitering" between midnight and sunrise.

Warned a fourth time, Dougan asked his girl, "Honey, do you want to leave?"

Honey wasn't in any hurry either. The "constitutional right" of lovers

to spend their hours in Milwaukee parkways will be tested in court later this month.

CASE TWO: A honeymooning couple from Janesville, Wis., was "arrested" at Jackson, Miss. But the happy pair didn't end up in court. Selected at random on the highway, they became symbols of Mississippi's "Hospitality Month."

They were given a parade, complete with motorcycle escort, down Jackson's main street. They visited the governor's mansion, lunched with city and state officials, and were given a free evening of dining and dancing.

Mr. Dougan's spirit is inspiring. There also is a great deal to be said for Jackson, Miss.

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

A few paragraphs of the Kefauver crime committee's report that should be pasted in the hats of those who insist the crime problem can be solved by "legalized gambling."

According to the investigators who studied this problem on a nationwide basis, this approach would play directly "into the hands of gangsters."

A few states, the Kefauver investigators conceded, have successfully regulated and controlled pari-mutuel betting on horse races. But it does not necessarily follow that it would be wise to legalize other forms of

gambling "far more likely to be dominated by underworld elements."

Said the Kefauver report: "There has not been presented to this committee any plan for extension of controlled gambling which carries with it a substantial chance for success. On the contrary, each plan for extending legal gambling appears to play into the hands of the gangster element."

When the Wisconsin legislature, in future years, is asked to relax its present strict and effective laws on gambling, let these words of the Kefauver report be remembered.

Russia in the Olympics?

Announcement that Russia will rejoin the Olympic brotherhood and participate in the 1952 Olympic games has caused some speculation. We see no reason why it should. The announcement probably means that Russia will NOT take part, but will be occupied elsewhere.

How in the world COULD Communist athletes compete in the Olympics?

Even Don Gehrman would need a half-hour to cover a mile if required to sing out "For the glory of wonderful Comrade Stalin!" every other stride. And Communist swimmers would have a tough time paddling across even the Yahara if saddled down with a few leather-bound volumes of Karl Marx.

The Soviet dictatorship could tol-

erate no losers, of course. No good Communist would dare further the capitalist cause by coming in second, third, or even worse. For such ploters—liquidation!

There also would be another problem. The 1952 Olympics are being held at Oslo and Helsinki, outside Russia's borders. A good many Russians who once taste freedom rebel at returning to Communism's Utopia. Russian athletes might show up with well-armed baby-sitters, to assure their return to Moscow.

The rest of the world would be happy to welcome Russia back to the Olympics. But such an event certainly will have its complications.

Try and Stop Me

BY BENNETT CERF

What Henry Mencken would call a typical female motorist came tooting merrily down the wrong side of a crowded thoroughfare and ran smack into Mr. Jordan's brand new convertible. While they were trying to untangle bumpers, the lady driver said grudgingly, "I'm afraid this was largely my fault." "Nonsense," said Mr. Jordan with a gallant bow. "I assure you the blame rests entirely with me. I saw you fully three blocks away and had ample time to dart down a side street."

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